



February 2002

SCHOOL FINANCE UPDATE

A Monthly Newsletter Published by the School Budgeting and Accounting Division

Montana Office of Public Instruction
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Linda McCulloch, State Superintendent

FY2002-03 Budget Info Coming March 1

OPI plans to mail the FY 2002-03 Preliminary Budget Data Sheets by March 1 to each district clerk/business manager. We will also post the FY03 General Fund Overview and Worksheets on the OPI website at www.opi.state.mt.us.

You will receive a cover memo and additional information concerning budgeting in the same packet. Contact: Bonnie Maze (406) 444-3249 or bmaze@state.mt.us.



LOOK FOR IT.....

Two memos containing information about the
Technology Fund
And
Flexibility Fund
are being sent to you March 1 with the Budget Data Sheets.

Spring Enrollment 2002

Thanks to LOTS of phone calls, we were able to round up ALL districts' Spring enrollment forms by the due date. *We appreciate those of you who consistently submit forms promptly!* Spring enrollment is critical because the special education rates delivered on March 1 Budget Data Sheets are dependent on the enrollment data.

For more information, please contact:

Joan Anderson, Division Administrator
School Budgeting and Accounting Division
(406) 444-4401 janderson@state.mt.us

1st Semester Transportation Payments

OPI will send your payment advice with the March direct state aid mailing around March 25. At the time you receive the state payment, the county will pay you its portion of the 1st semester payment, too. The state and county payments both are shown on the payment advice we'll send you. Contact: Maxine Mougeot (406)444-3096 or mmougeot@state.mt.us.

Bus Drivers and Insulin-Controlled Diabetes

A new federal regulation restricts people who are insulin dependent from passing the DOT physical required for school bus driver certification. The Department of Transportation (DOT) implemented a new Medical Examination Report on October 1, 2001.

The new regulation will affect bus drivers next time they update their physical for the commercial drivers' license (CDL). All drivers must have a DOT physical

Audit Reminder:
A-133 Federal
Audits of FY01 are
Due to OPI
March 31.

prior to applying for a CDL. Drivers must pass a physical every two years to keep their CDL current.

On the back of the physical form is the following language:

*"Federal Motor Carrier Safety Regulations 391.41(b)(3): A person is physically qualified to drive a commercial motor vehicle if that person has **no established medical history or clinical diagnosis of diabetes mellitus currently requiring insulin for control.**"*

Montana Motor Carriers said that even though the regulation says "commercial motor vehicle", the intention is to include school buses. There have been requests to propose a waiver of some sort, but so far the federal government has not addressed the issue. [For information regarding the proposed diabetes exemption program, please contact Ms. Sandra Zywockarte, Office of Bus and Truck Standards and Operations, at (202) 366-2987.]

Complete information can be found on the back of the Department of Transportation medical examination form. Go to the following link for another good source of information regarding this and other health related issues:
<http://www.fmcsa.dot.gov/rulesregs/medreports.htm>

OPI Contact: Maxine Mougeot, State Transportation Director, (406) 444-3096 or mmougeot@state.mt.us.

Advanced Driver Education for Traffic Educators and School Bus Drivers

Montana's Advanced Driver Education Program in Lewistown trains drivers on how to safely handle critical driving situations. This program is designed for school bus drivers and others who desire or require additional knowledge and skill in driving. This program is really a "must" for all drivers who handle school buses and other school district vehicles!

The district can use the transportation fund budget to pay for this excellent training for bus drivers. By including this cost in the transportation budget for next year, the district could send its bus drivers to take the course this summer, after the new budget year starts.

The program will be taking reservations in late March for several 1-day workshops between the 2nd week of June and the 2nd week of August. The schedule should be posted in late March. If you are interested, please visit the OPI website at www.opi.state.mt.us.

Bus Standards Proposed

OPI will propose updated school bus standards at the upcoming Board of Public Education (BPE) meeting to be held March 14-15, 2002. Proposed standards are posted on the OPI website at www.opi.state.mt.us for your review.

A committee of school personnel, bus contractors, bus drivers and mechanics, and representatives of the Montana Highway Patrol, the Department of Transportation, and OPI wrote the updates. Proposed standards are essentially based on national procedures and guidelines set in 2000, customized in some aspects for Montana. Contact: Maxine Mougeot, State Transportation Director, (406) 444-3096 or mmougeot@state.mt.us.

Coming Next Month:

FY 2002-03 Indirect Cost Rate Applications

In late March, OPI will send each district an application for an indirect cost rate for FY 2002-03 grants. Applications are due to OPI in May. Look for more information in that mailing.



School Finance Calendar is New and Improved!! (and Electronic)

Please see the School Finance Calendar posted on the OPI website at www.opi.state.mt.us under the <School Finance> area. Look for "School Finance Calendar."

We'll be glad to help you find it! OPI Contact: Nica Carte at (406) 444-4401 or ncarte@state.mt.us.

cc: Auditors, MASBO, MSBA, MEA-MFT, County Superintendents, MREA